

62 (63)

CONSIDERATIONS

In relation to

Mr. *Russel's* Charge against Mr. *Gwyn*, Agent for the Spanish Pacquet-Boats, &c. and the Report thereupon.

THE said Mr. *Russel* in his Petition hath charg'd Mr. *Gwyn* with false Musters on the said Pacquet-Boats, imbezelling their Stores, extorting Money from Sailors and others, defrauding the said Ships in their Victualling, and importing Salt in the said Ships without paying Customs or Excise, to the great abuse of his Majesty, wrong to the Sailors, and great advantage to himself.

1st. It's humbly hop'd it appear'd before the Committee, that as many Men were actually in the Service of the said Ships as were charg'd to be paid; and generally two or more than were actually charg'd in the Pay-book, serv'd on board, receiving no Wages; one of which in each Ship (for about four years past) serv'd under another name, and these two Mens Pay, together with the Pay of *Samuel Cornish* for ten Months Service (as was testified by Capt. *Clies*, Mr. *Roger*, and Mr. *Shepherd*) was actually apply'd to the defraying contingent Charges, which would have been (if not by this) some other way discharg'd by the Post-Office. So that tho' in strictness this may be term'd an irregular Muster (seeing the very Man whose name was entred, was not actually on board) yet the same was not to the Prejudice, but advantage of the Crown, and not to Mr. *Gwyn's* private Advantage, as the Petition doth insinuate; and therefore notwithstanding the Committee (upon a Division) were pleas'd to resolve, That the said Mr. *Gwyn* hath been guilty of making false Musters according to the Petition: yet if it appear to this Honourable House, that herein his Majesty was not defrauded, it's humbly hop'd your Honours will not esteem this Practice an Abuse to the King.

2^{ly}. Mr. *Gwyn* is charged with importing Salt in the said Ships without paying either Customs or Excise, to his great profit.

Some small Quantities of Salt were by the Commander and Purser in these Ships imported, only for the use of those Pacquet-Boats; which Mr. *Gwyn* (at first) did not think needful to enter, seeing 'twas spent in the King's Service; but when advis'd that in strictness all this Salt ow'd Customs, and some part thereof Excise, he did thereupon inquire into the Quantities brought in, and times of Importation; and having laid this matter before the Commissioners of the Customs, he receiv'd their Directions for entering the same, before he had heard of any Informations relating thereunto. Pursuant to those Directions (as soon as he return'd from London) he caus'd an Entry to be made of four Wey and a Quarter of Salt, paying Excise for the same at 5 pence per Gallon, besides

besides other Duties, which amounts to more than the Duty of nine Wey, had the same been Entred when Imported, seeing a great part thereof was brought in before this Duty was payable.

Nor hath he charg'd his Majesty with more than the Salt and those Duties cost him.

3^{ly}. To prove the pretended Frauds in Victualling, Mr. *Slade* the Purser declared he gave Mr. *Gwyn* a Receipt for 1100 weight of Pork, when only 600 pound was put on board the old *Spanish Expedition*. It was alledged, Mr. *Gwyn* had charged higher Prices for Victuals than others in those Parts then paid.

It did not appear, upon view of all Mr. *Slade's* Vouchers, that ever such a Receipt was by him given, or such a Quantity by Mr. *Gwyn* ever charged; and that whatsoever Provision Mr. *Gwyn* had charg'd to the said Ship, was justified by proper Vouchers under Mr. *Slade's* own hand. The several Provisions Mr. *Gwyn* bought for these Ships were the best of the kind, and therefore their Prices might be greater than were paid by others for a worse sort; and all those Prices justified by proper Vouchers. And it's humbly hoped that several worthy Members of this Honourable Committee do remember that Mr. *Gwyn* did produce an Abstract of seven years Account of what Butter he had bought for his Majesty's Service in that time: and (all Charge and Loss consider'd) he lost by the Butter he bought upon the King's Account.

4^{ly}. It's alledg'd, Mr. *Gwyn* extorted Money from Sailors.

The Fact appeared to be thus, *viz.* In November 1697. Mr. *Gwyn* advanced of his own Money about 600 *Spanish* Pistols, to pay off Sailors then to be discharged; and having cull'd of the lightest about 30 *l.* worth, and paid them to the Captain at or about 4 *l.* per Ounce (and this done, as Captain *Clies* prov'd, that the Seamen might receive no light Pistols) he paid the rest to the Seamen at 17 *s.* 6 *d.* a-piece. And tho upon change of a few Pistols for Silver, a small loss was sustained by four or five, yet the rest were put off by most of the Seamen at 17 *s.* 6 *d.* and 18 *s.* per Pistol. When Mr. *Gwyn* thus advanced these Pistols for the quieting of the Seamen, who were ready to mutiny, and threatned to pull down his House for want of their Pay, and who would have been contented to have received fifteen Shillings in the Pound, as was testified by the said Captain before the Committee, he could then have paid them in *London* at 18 *s.* a-piece; and he dos humbly suppose not many instances can be produced where Agents advanced Money out of their own Pockets to pay Soldiers or Seamen upon such terms. How far this may induce your Honours to resolve the said Mr. *Gwyn* hath been guilty of Extortions from the Sailors (as alledged in the Petition) is humbly submitted to the great Wisdom and Justice of this Honourable House; to several worthy Members whereof it's known that the said Mr. *Gwyn* at several times hath advanced M A N Y T H O U S A N D Pounds for the necessary Supplies of those Pacquet Boats, without any reward for the same. And it's further submitted to this Honourable House, what credit ought to be given to the Testimonies of known Smugglers, advanced against an Officer, for daring to perform his Duty; one of which declared he would do Mr. *Gwyn* all the Injury he could, for searching his House for uncustom'd Goods.